

How to compost – Brief guide to get you started

1. Why compost?

Composting is a noble art with a very long history in sustainable food production. More and more, people are motivated by the desire for healthy soil, healthy food and a smaller environmental footprint. If all food waste was composted, food grown in our farms and gardens would be healthy, tasty and good to eat. *Read more at mazingproducts.com.au/composting*

2. How to compost

Making compost is just like making a cake. We need the right ingredients in the correct proportions and mixed properly. We also need to get the moisture content and aeration right. But unlike making a cake, we don't have to be too precise about how we mix things.

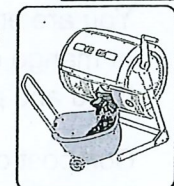
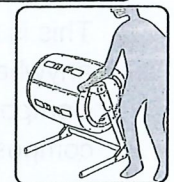
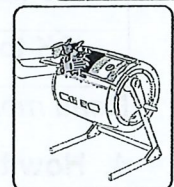
In simple terms, we are managing a balance between stuff that is easy to break down, and stuff that takes a bit longer. This is most easily understood by calling the easy-to-break-down stuff the 'green', and the harder-to-break-down stuff, the 'brown'. A 50/50 mixture of green to brown is a great place to start for successful composting.

Simple steps

1. Collect kitchen scraps in a kitchen caddy or indoor composter. It will speed things up if you chop this waste where possible.
2. Add the kitchen scraps to composter with some 'brown' scraps at similar timeframes. Try to chop up or shred the brown waste as well if possible.

If using the divided option start by adding to one half only. Use the door with the '+' symbol to remind you which side is being filled.

3. Turn the composter at least 2-3 times a week. When adding waste always give it a few turns.
4. Keep adding until full (or too hard to turn) ensuring to keep the consistency right. Once the first side is full, start filling the other compartment. Make sure to swap the doors so now the '⊕' door is on the side that you just filled and the '+' is on the empty side.
5. You will know when the '⊕' side is ready when the contents look and smell like soil. Once it is ready, rotate the opening to the bottom, place a bucket or Compost Cart under and then slide the door open to let the compost fall out. You may need to help it come out by using a trowel to scrape it out
6. Once empty swap the doors around again and start filling the empty side and repeat



3. What to compost

Table 1 below gives you an idea of what is green and what is brown. Table two gives you some idea of what else you can / cannot put into a compost. For best results chop or shred greens and browns before adding, and make sure the mix is moist, not wet. Remember, we want to blend green and brown 50 / 50 by weight, not by volume.

Table 1. Green and Brown Compost Inputs

Green	Notes
Green leaves	Good to use
Grass clippings	Great addition when mixed well; can become smelly if not mixed
Green weeds	Avoid putting in seeds or runners
Fruit or vegetable scraps	Good to use
Cut flowers	Good to use but chop up into 100mm lengths before adding
Cooked food	No chunky meat, cheese or very oily wastes (e.g. fine meat or cheese like leftover spaghetti bolognese is ok)
Cow, horse, pig, chicken manures (not dog or cat)	Good to use. Dog and cat manures can harbour diseases so best not to use.
Lucerne hay	Good to use
Blood and bone or dynamic lifter	Use only if you have too much 'brown' materials. Sprinkle lightly and make sure everything is kept moist.

Brown	Notes
Brown leaves	Good.
Dead grass or weeds	Good.
Paper and cardboard	Good
Mulch, Sawdust, Hay or Straw	Good to use if you have an imbalance of 'green'.

Table 2. Do's and Don'ts

Do not use:	Cooking oil, dog or cat manures, chunky meat or cheese, bones
OK to use:	Egg shells, wood ash, bread, milk or juice past its 'use by' date

Read more at mazingproducts.com.au/composting

4. How to use compost

This is where you get rewarded for your attention to your compost bin. Composting can take anywhere from 8 weeks to 24 weeks to mature and be ready to be applied to your garden. Compost that you buy from the hardware is usually quite fine because commercial composters screen the material before sale to remove the chunky bits.

You are encouraged to do the same as you will most likely find large particles such as twigs or mango or avocado stones still not broken down. It is a simple process to remove these by hand and put them back into the compost to continue breaking down.

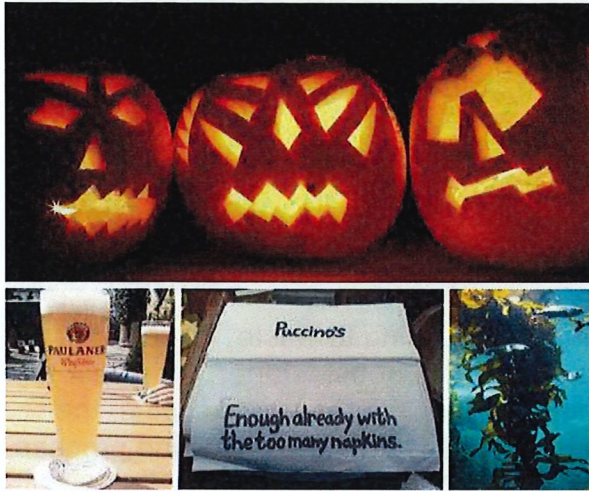
Compost can be surface applied or dug into the soil. If you are applying compost to an established garden or under fruit trees, you really have no choice but to apply it to the surface as you can't easily dig it in. If you are applying compost to your vegetable garden, then you want to dig it in. *read more ... at mazingproducts.com.au/composting*

For more info, FAQs and troubleshooting visit mazingproducts.com.au/composting

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Things You Didn't Know You Could Compost



Composting is a way of utilizing microorganisms to break down and decompose organic matter. The unique benefits of composting include a reduction of waste needlessly going into landfills and the production of a free stable, organic soil amendment that can't be beat. Many people compost their yard waste and kitchen scraps, but there are many other materials that are generally thrown away that could easily be converted into compost and given back to the soil instead and far stranger ways to compost than most people realize.

Hair and Nail Clippings



Human hair is a rich source of nitrogen and can be added to a compost pile or bin. Likewise, fingernail and toenail clippings can also be composted if they are free from all nail polish. If you happen to use peanuts to keep your toes apart during a pedicure, you compost those as well. Some people claim that in addition to being great for the compost, human hair in the garden helps repel deer that can quickly demolish treasured plants.

Beer, Wine and Brewery Waste



As unlikely as it is that you would have any beer or wine going to waste, if you did, it could be added to the compost. Wine can also act as a compost “starter,” and spur the bacteria in the compost to get to work. If you brew your own beer or make wine, the waste products from these processes can also be beneficial to the composting process.

Vacuum Cleaner “Dirt”



When you sweep or vacuum your floor, sofa or keyboard, most of the “dirt” you pick up is usually comprised of crumbs, dust, hair and similar debris. Instead of emptying the dustpan or canister into a wastebasket, it can be put into your compost bin, barrel or pile. Any synthetic fibers that may be picked up

will not decompose during the composting process, but they won't hurt the compost either and can be sifted out later if you wish.

Cotton Balls and Cotton Swabs



Used cotton balls and cotton swabs can also be composted. To be sure that your cotton balls and swabs are suitable for composting, check the packaging to make sure they actually are made of cotton, rather than synthetic fibers. Cotton is a natural substance and makes a wonderful addition to compost, but if

you use synthetic “cotton balls” for makeup application or in caring for an infant, they will not decompose in the compost bin.

Used Paper Towels, Tissues, Paper Napkins and Toilet Paper Rolls



Paper products that you use every day and generally toss in the garbage could be composting in your backyard, rather than sitting in a landfill. These items, including the cardboard cores and packaging can add bulk to your compost. If you have allergies and use a lot of tissues, they can all go in the compost. If you have a cold or other type of viral infection, it may be best to consult a medical professional before composting them. Composting used tissues is a controversial issue. While most cold and flu viruses do not survive for long outside the human body, the jury is still out on

composting tissues used during an illness.

Dry Pet Food and Pet Hair



If you have pets, you probably have a readily and continuously available supply of compostable materials at your disposal. Any dry pet food that might go to waste makes an excellent addition to compost and can kick start the process into high gear. You have surely noticed that your pet sheds a lot too, and all that pet hair

can go into the compost as well. Alternatively, in the early spring, you may want to leave clumps of pet hair and dryer lint in bushes near your home to provide native birds with nesting materials.

Dead Flowers



When a flower bouquet has seen better days, it can still be put to good use. While no longer fit to provide fragrance or home decor, these dead flowers can complete the circle of life by becoming compost to feed the soil, which will in turn feed the next generation of blooms.

Seaweed and Kelp



If you live near a body of water, you can collect seaweed and kelp to add to your compost. Avid gardeners often use seaweed and kelp to nourish their plants, and by adding them to your compost you are increasing the nutritional value of your end product. Compost enthusiasts have been known to drive great distances to harvest these

materials, all in the name of better compost.

Unpaid Bills and Shredded Paper



Junk mail, bills you don't intend to pay, magazines and other waste paper can be shredded and added to your compost. Paper is an especially good ingredient during the spring and summer months when carbon-rich dried leaves may not be readily available. If you have a cat, he or she may be willing to do your paper

shredding for you, otherwise you can shred it by hand or use a commercial paper shredder to speed up the decomposition.

Halloween Pumpkins and Bales of Straw



After Halloween, there is usually an abundance of jack-o-lanterns on the curb for trash pick-up. Pumpkins decompose fairly quickly and are an excellent source of nitrogen for compost. Fall decorations also often include bales of straw, which can also

be used as a carbon-rich ingredient in the compost pile.